

2.11 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

This section discusses the environmental effects that may occur cumulatively with the security action to restrict vehicular traffic in the vicinity of the White House, as a result of implementation of other projects in the extended study area, whether planned, currently underway, or completed. A cumulative effect is defined in 40 CFR 1508.7 as the “impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions.” Therefore, for each resource affected by the security action, the EA should identify all other actions that may affect the resource, and, to the extent reasonably possible, assess the cumulative effects.

The extended study area is a mature urban area that is not subject to extensive development pressures. The core study area, in fact, comprises numerous historic buildings and lands that are largely protected from further development. In the extended study area, few major developments have taken place recently, are occurring now, or are planned in the foreseeable future. This extended study area includes mostly office and retail buildings with little vacant land for construction of new buildings or development of other projects. Parkland and the street system comprise much of the remaining land. In some instances, older structures have been replaced by newer buildings, but the land uses remain generally the same.

There is one major development under construction within the extended study area. There are also several major developments being constructed or in various stages of planning outside of but near the extended study area. The major developments that would have potential cumulative environmental effects when combined with the security action are described and discussed below.

2.11.1 Extended Study Area Projects

Within the extended study area, there are two projects underway: (1) the construction of the Ronald Reagan Building, a new federal office building on 14th Street between Pennsylvania Avenue and Constitution Avenue; and (2) the *EA for the Long-Term Design, Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, President’s Park*, which is an element of the Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House.

The Ronald Reagan Building. The Ronald Reagan Building is a 3.1 million-square-foot facility that will house various federal agencies, the Woodrow Wilson Center, and the International Trade Center. The federal tenants of the building include the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Customs Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The building is being constructed in the Federal Triangle under the direction of the General Services Administration (GSA) on a parcel that was formerly used as an 1,800-space surface parking lot. The building will also have four basement levels that will include approximately 1,930 parking spaces. The net increase in parking at this location would be limited to a gain of 130 spaces, compared to conditions prior to construction of the building. A large amount of retail space is also planned for the building. Occupancy of the building will begin in early 1997 and is scheduled to be completed by early 1999. Approximately 6,600 employees are expected to occupy the Ronald Reagan Building.

In addition to the construction of the Ronald Reagan Building, the federal government is also renovating two other buildings in the block bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, 12th Street, Constitution Avenue, and 14th Street. These two structures are the Ariel Rios Building, located at 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Customs Service Building, fronting on Constitution Avenue between 12th Street and 14th Street. Additionally, the John A. Wilson Building (formerly known as the District Building), which is located at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Street, is being renovated to accommodate District and federal

employees.¹ The renovation of these buildings would not increase the number of employees in the area and so would not affect traffic volume.

Consideration of potential cumulative impacts associated with the Ronald Reagan Building focused on the combined effects of the generation of new traffic on local streets (principally 14th Street) by occupants of the building with traffic diversions created by the security action. The building will have one vehicular entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue and two on 14th Street. Both of the 14th Street entrances will have traffic signals.

The two entrances on 14th Street are of particular concern due to the current peak-period congestion on that street, especially during the P.M. peak hour for southbound traffic exiting the building. In the P.M. peak period, vehicles exiting the building in the southbound direction will be required to use only the north portal of the parking garage in order to minimize queuing problems at the 14th Street/Constitution Avenue intersection. During the A.M. peak period, vehicles entering the building would use both entrances in the northbound direction on 14th Street but would be limited to the south entrance of the building from southbound 14th Street in order to avoid queuing on 14th Street in the vicinity of the 14th Street/Pennsylvania Avenue intersection.

The effects of the traffic generated by the Ronald Reagan Building combined with the diversion of traffic resulting from the security action would be limited to potential effects on air quality (specifically carbon monoxide concentrations) at nearby congested intersections. As a result, an analysis of CO concentrations of the combined traffic for 1999 was undertaken at the 14th Street and Constitution Avenue and 14th and H Street / New York Avenue intersections. These two air quality analysis locations have the highest likelihood for violation of CO emission standards and would be the most affected by the cumulative impacts of the action with the Ronald Reagan Building. The analysis used regional planning estimates for growth, and traffic assignments based on the analyses performed for the security action and the Ronald Reagan Building. The analysis assumed that the integrated traffic management system (ITMS), an FHWA-funded traffic improvement project designed to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion in the District, will be in place. (See Section 2.3 for a more thorough discussion of air quality.)

The results of this analysis (Table 2-16) show that there would be no exceedences of national air quality standards (the NAAQS). CO concentrations on 14th Street and H Street / New York Avenue will be much improved over 1997 conditions, especially in the PM period. The decreases are due predominantly to the beneficial effects of the ITMS but also to the decrease in average fleet emission rates which occur over time. CO concentrations on 14th Street at Constitution Avenue would still be below the NAAQS, but could be slightly higher than in 1997 in the PM period. The increased CO concentrations would be caused by increased congestion on southbound 14th Street at Constitution Avenue.

Based on this analysis, no cumulative impacts of the Ronald Reagan Building with this security action are anticipated. In addition, GSA is preparing a Transportation Management Plan for the subject block that will address the issues of vehicular access and the Ronald Reagan Building. This plan is anticipated to include measures that will allow management of ingress and egress to the building.

¹ Personal communication with *Carol Braegelman*, General Services Administration, November 25, 1996.

Table 2-17

Maximum Ambient Carbon Monoxide Concentrations (ppm)
Cumulative Impact Assessment of the Security Action with the Ronald Reagan Building- AM and PM Peak Periods

	Analysis Location	1-hour (NAAQS = 35.0 ppm)		8-hour (NAAQS = 9.0 ppm)	
		AM	PM	AM	PM
#4	14th St. @ H St. & New York Ave.	7.2	9.8	4.8	6.7
#5	Const. Ave. @ 14th St.	9.9	12.3	6.7	8.4
	Const. Ave. @ 15th St.	9.6	9.0	6.5	6.1

NOTES:

1. 1-hour background concentration = 2.12 ppm
2. 8-hour background concentration = 1.27 ppm

White House. The *EA for the Long-Term Design, Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, President's Park*² is a project designed to improve the appearance of the area bordered by Pennsylvania Avenue, 15th Street, 17th Street, and H Street; to maintain vehicular access for official government uses; and to accommodate special needs, such as presidential inaugural parades and First Amendment activities. The environmental assessment for this plan was initiated subsequent to the security action. Major elements of the preferred alternative, as presented in the environmental assessment prepared for the plan, call for removal of parking along Jackson Place (permit parking) and enhancement of the visual landscape, in part, by removing temporary barriers, installing permanent security barriers and new fountains, and extensive landscaping.

The potential adverse cumulative effects of the *EA for the Long-Term Design, Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, President's Park*, in combination with the effects of the security action, are limited primarily to parking. Both projects together will result in a quieter and more pleasant experience on the north side of the White House by removing parked or moving vehicles from Pennsylvania Avenue, Jackson and Madison Places, and H Street. The cumulative adverse effects will be primarily limited to the loss of parking in the vicinity of Lafayette Square. The planned removal of 60 spaces on Jackson Place will require the relocation of parking for individuals using permit parking on this street. The *EA for the Long-Term Design, Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, President's Park*, does not state where new parking would be provided for these individuals, but sufficient commercial parking is normally available in nearby office buildings. This loss of parking, in combination with the net loss of 49 on-street parking spaces as a result of the security action, should not place an undue burden on overall parking capacity in the extended study area. The on-street parking is short-term, commercial-oriented parking that would not necessarily compete with long-term daily parking associated with the loss of permit-parking spaces on Jackson Place, that serve employees of the nearby office buildings.

² Environmental Assessment for the Long-Term Design, Pennsylvania Avenue at the White House, President's Park, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 1996.

2.11.2 Projects Outside the Extended Study Area

Two major projects are underway outside of but near the extended study area: the MCI Arena, which is under construction between 6th, 7th, F and H Streets, and the development of a new Convention Center at a preferred six-block location just north of Mount Vernon Square. The entertainment and special use nature of each of these projects, as well as their distance from the extended study area, indicates that there is little or no potential for cumulative adverse impacts when examined in relationship to the action to restrict vehicular access in the vicinity of the White House. Each project is discussed below.

MCI Arena. This arena, currently being constructed in the area bordered by 6th, 7th, F, and H Streets, will have a seating capacity of approximately 20,000 people. The arena will also contain retail, restaurant, and office space and host an estimated 200 events per year. The final environmental impact statement for the arena estimated that Pennsylvania Avenue in the vicinity of the White House, which is eight blocks west of the arena site, would accommodate less than 5 percent of the traffic generated by the arena. This east-west traffic, with the vehicle restrictions of the action now in place, would be shifted to H, I, and K Streets. Arena-generated traffic would largely occur after the P.M. peak traffic periods or during the weekends and is not expected to conflict with peak-period congestion. The spectators and other people attending events at the arena are expected to depend heavily on Metrorail, and on-street and garage parking in the area of the arena is expected to be sufficient to cover potential parking demand.

New D.C. Convention Center. The New D.C. Convention Center is a major development project being planned at a preferred location north of Mount Vernon Square (a second alternative site is also being examined at 2nd Street and New York Avenue, N.E., which is nearly two miles from the White House). The preferred site is bounded by K, M, 7th, and 9th Streets, Northwest, and is located 0.8 miles northeast of the White House. Although portions of 8th Street on the site would be closed, L Street would remain open as a major westbound artery. The new convention center, which would contain approximately 2 million gross square feet of space, would replace the existing convention center located between 9th and 11th Streets on the south side of New York Avenue.

Although expected to be a major generator of traffic in the northwest quadrant of downtown Washington, D.C., the new convention center is sufficiently removed from the extended study area as to preclude major cumulative impacts on traffic. Traffic associated with day events at the convention center will be heavily linked to the hotels in the District. Many of the hotels that serve as major housing locations for large convention events at the new center are located along the Connecticut Avenue corridor or other locations in the northwest quadrant of the city north of Pennsylvania Avenue.

The east-west flow of traffic to and from the new center will be focused on K, L, and M Streets and along New York and Massachusetts Avenues. New York Avenue will serve as the primary link to I-395, the nearest interstate highway. None of these routes, except for portions of K Street more than one-quarter mile to the west, will be affected by traffic diversions caused by the security action. Cumulative adverse impacts are not likely to occur as a result of the security action in combination with construction and operation of a new convention center. With the closing of the existing convention center, which is located several blocks closer to the extended study area than the preferred site of the new center, any cumulative changes in traffic effects would most likely result in a lessening of traffic congestion in the area. The Washington Convention Center Authority is presently preparing a transportation management plan that will address access, parking, deliveries, traffic signals, traffic flow, and signs associated with the new convention center.